

Grade 4 Informative/Explanatory Writing – Inquiry Report

Instructional Unit Resource for the
*South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards for
English Language Arts*

South Carolina Department of Education
Office of Standards and Learning
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Grade 4: Informative/Explanatory Writing: Inquiry Report

Unit Rationale/Overview:

This unit on informational writing contains a strong emphasis on reading informational texts so that students will learn to investigate and choose topics suitable for research. The unit's purpose is to guide students in examining and conveying complex ideas as they read a variety of informational texts. They will enhance their understanding of the information through the use of multiple sources, such as read alouds, artifacts, and internet research.

Throughout this unit, fourth grade students will be immersed in nonfiction texts that demonstrate the qualities of informational/explanatory writing. They will use inquiry to drive questioning and research to learn new concepts. Students will have multiple opportunities to engage in writing activities that allow them to demonstrate, collaborate, and write independently. As they write, they will attend to their assigned task, intended purpose, and targeted audience while creating and publishing an inquiry report that addresses real-world contexts.

The teacher's modeling of writing strategies and of thinking aloud is crucial to the implementation of this unit in terms of drafting, as well as demonstrating craft and revision. The teacher will serve as the expert writer, who both models and writes with children as she/he instructs them in the writing process.

Through collaboration, analysis of literary texts, and writing, students will learn to develop the world class skills listed in the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.

<http://ed.sc.gov/scdoe/assets/File/newsroom/Profile-of-the-South-Carolina-Graduate.pdf>

Estimated time frame: three weeks.

Standards and Indicators

Targeted implies that these standards are the focus of the unit.

Embedded implies that these standards will be naturally integrated throughout the units.

Targeted Standards/Indicators

Writing

- 4.W.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.**
- 4.W.2.1 Write informative/explanatory texts that:
- introduce a topic clearly;

- b. use information from multiple print and multimedia sources;
- c. group related information into paragraphs and sections;
- d. include formatting, illustrations, and multimedia to aid comprehension;
- e. develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic;
- f. develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing, building on personal ideas and the ideas of others;
- g. use paraphrasing, quotations, and original language to avoid plagiarism;
- h. link ideas within categories of information using transitional words and phrases;
- i. use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform or explain the topic;
- j. develop a style and tone authentic to the purpose; and
- k. provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.

Reading – Informational Text

4.RI.6 Summarize key details and ideas to support analysis of central ideas.

4.RI.6.1 Summarize multi-paragraph texts, using key details to support the central idea.

4.RI.8 Interpret and analyze the author’s use of words, phrases, text features, conventions, and structures, and how their relationships shape meaning and tone in print and multimedia texts.

4.RI.8.1 Determine how the author uses words and phrases to shape and clarify meaning.

4.RI.8.2 Apply knowledge of text features to gain meaning; describe the relationship between these features and the text.

Embedded Standards/Indicators

Inquiry-Based Literacy

4.I.2 Transact with texts to formulate questions, propose explanations, and consider alternative views and multiple perspectives.

4.I.2.1 Explore topics of interest to formulate logical questions; build knowledge; generate possible explanations; consider alternative views.

4.I.3 Construct knowledge, applying disciplinary concepts and tools, to build deeper understanding of the world through exploration, collaboration, and analysis.

4.I.3.1 Develop a plan of action for collecting relevant information from primary and secondary sources.

4.I.3.2 Organize and categorize important information; collaborate to validate or revise thinking; report relevant findings.

4.I.4 Synthesize information to share learning and/or take action.

- 4.I.4.1 Draw logical conclusions from relationships and patterns discovered during the inquiry process

Communication

- 4.C.1 Interact with others to explore ideas and concepts, communicate meaning, and develop logical interpretations through collaborative conversations; build upon the ideas of others to clearly express one's own views while respecting diverse perspectives.**
- 4.C.1.5 Explain personal ideas and build on the ideas of others by responding and relating to comments made in multiple exchanges.
- 4.C.2 Articulate ideas, claims, and perspectives in a logical sequence, using information, findings, and credible evidence from sources**
- 4.C.2.1 Articulate ideas, perspectives and information with details and supporting evidence in a logical sequence with a clear introduction, body, and conclusion.
- 4.C.3 Communicate information through strategic use of multiple modalities and multimedia to enrich understanding when presenting ideas and information**
- 4.C.3.1 Compare and contrast how ideas and topics are depicted in a variety of media and formats.
- 4.C.3.2 Create presentations, using video, photos, and other multimedia elements to support communication and clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

Clarifying Notes and/or “I Can” Statements

The lesson format is that of gradual release. Using the Gradual Release Model, a teacher models for students as a whole group, has them practice in a small group, and then work independently (Levy, 2007). The modeling portion (I do) is a mini-lesson shown by the teacher and should emphasize how to *think through* the process while demonstrating it. The guided practice (we do) might include the teacher and students' working together, students' working in small groups, or both. It is recommended, but not required, that students complete the independent practice (you do) on their own to determine their individual mastery of the “I can” statement (and standard). Naturally, this format is not required, and teachers who choose to use the included lessons or structure should determine which suggestions fit best within the gradual release components (or other instructional method) based on their knowledge of students.

Refer to Gradual Release Model at <http://www.sjboces.org/doc/Gifted/GradualReleaseResponsibilityJan08.pdf>

The strategies listed within this unit can be taught within Writer's Workshop. When Writer's Workshop is integrated with reading, students construct meaning in a more authentic way. The components of Writer's Workshop are read aloud/mentor texts, mini-lessons, independent writing, conferring, guided writing, and sharing/publishing.

Teaching Elementary Students to be Effective Writers provides evidence –based recommendations for addressing writing for instructional practices. Those recommendations include the following:

1. Provide daily time for students to write.
- 2.a. Teach students the writing process.
- 2.b. Teach students to write for a variety of purposes.
3. Teach students to become proficient in handwriting, spelling, sentence construction, typing, and word processing.
4. Create an engaged community of writers. (Institute of Education Sciences, 2012)

For more information: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practice_guides/writing_pg_062612.pdf

***The Fundamentals of Writing* (K-12)**

The Fundamentals of Writing provides the classroom structure for a writing community, using a workshop approach. Students learn the recursive process of writing, act as writing collaborators with their teacher and peers, produce clear and coherent writing, and incorporate author’s craft techniques in their work. *The Fundamentals of Writing* is designed for students in K-12; therefore, these are on-going expectations for English Language Arts classrooms. You may find *The Fundamentals of Writing* in the SCCR Standards document.

<http://ed.sc.gov/scdoe/assets/File/instruction/standards/ELA/ELA%20Standards/Fundamentals%202015%20Process.pdf>

“I Can” Statements

Primary “I Can” Statements

- I can use information from multiple print and multimedia sources to develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details. (4.W.2.1b, 4.W.2.1e)
- I can use paraphrasing, quotations, and original language to avoid plagiarism. (4.W.2.1g)
- I can use transition words and phrases to link ideas within categories of information. (4.W.2.1h)
- I can include formatting, illustrations, and multimedia to aid comprehension. (4.W.2.1d)
- I can provide a concluding statement or section. (4.W.2.1k)
- I can plan, revise, and edit my writing, building on personal ideas and the ideas of others (4.W.2.1f)
- I can summarize multi-paragraph texts, using key details to support the central idea. (4.RI.6.1)
- I can determine how an author shapes and clarifies meaning from words and phrases. (4.RI.8.1)
- I can use text features in multiple texts to describe the relationships between features and gain meaning. (4.RI.8.2).

Essential Questions

These are **suggested** essential questions that will help guide student inquiry.

- How can we use reading and writing to learn or inform?
- How can we use writing to inform or explain topics to others?
- How do readers think about what is similar and different in and across texts?
- How do authors use reasons and evidence to support particular points in the text?

Academic Vocabulary

Some students may need extra support with the following academic vocabulary in order to understand what they are being asked to do. Teaching these terms in an instructional context is recommended rather than teaching the words in isolation. An appropriate time to deliver explicit instruction would be during the modeling process.

plagiarism

paraphrase

primary sources-original works in various media formats, such as photographs, drawings, letters, diaries, documents, books, films, posters, play scripts, speeches, songs, sheet music, and first-person accounts recorded at the time an event happened

secondary sources - sources created by someone either not present when the event took place or removed by time from the event. Examples of secondary sources include textbooks, journal articles, histories, and encyclopedias.

Prior Knowledge

Students should be able to:

- write an informative/explanatory text that introduces a topic and groups related information together. (3.W.2.1j)
- use information from multiple print and multimedia sources to develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details. (3.W.2.1k, 3.W.2.1m)
- paraphrase and use original language to avoid plagiarism. (3.W.2.1o)
- use transitional words and phrases to connect ideas within categories of information. (3.W.2.1p)
- develop style and tone authentic to their writing purpose. (3.W.2.1q)
- include illustrations to aid comprehension. (3.W.2.1l)
- provide a concluding statement or section. (3.W.2.1r)

- plan, revise, and edit writing independently and with a partner. (3.W.2.1n)
- explain how the author uses words and phrases to inform, explain, describe. (3.RI.8.1)
- identify timelines, maps and charts used to locate information and gain meaning from the text. (3.RI.8.2)
- identify the appendix, and use it to locate information and gain meaning from text. (3.RI.8.2)
- describe the relationships among text features (i.e. appendices, timelines, maps, and charts) and how they contribute to the overall meaning of the text. (3.RI.8.1)

Subsequent Knowledge

In fifth grade, students are expected to:

- create informative/explanatory writing that is clear, coherent, developed, organized and appropriate to a given task and audience. (5.W.2.1)
- use information from multiple print and multimedia sources to develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details. (5.W.2.1k, 5.W.2.1m)
- use paraphrasing, quotations, summarizing, and original language to avoid plagiarism. (5.W.2.1i)
- use transitional words, phrases, and clauses to connect ideas within categories of information. (5.W.2.1j)
- develop style and tone authentic to their writing purpose. (5.W.2.1l)
- include formatting, illustrations, and multimedia to aid comprehension. (5.W.2.1f)
- provide a concluding statement or section. (5.W.2.1m)
- plan, revise, and edit writing independently and with a partner. (5.W.2.1h)
- make meaning from the words and phrases that an author uses. (5.RI.8.1)
- apply knowledge of text features to understand a text or solve a problem. (5.RI.8.2)
- use text features in multiple texts to gain meaning or solve a problem. (5.RI.8.2)

Potential Instructional Strategies

All lessons will build toward students' writing an inquiry report based on the topics of their choosing. The topic may be one of general interest or taken from other content areas, such as science or social studies.

Students need to be immersed in reading informational texts, including primary and secondary sources, to choose suitable topics on which to gather information.

Note: Collect an assortment of informational books to have in the classroom to serve as mentor texts. Ensure that when students have chosen topics of interest that an adequate number of resources and materials are readily available.

Instructional Strategy: Generate and select a topic to research

Learning Target: I can develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning and building on personal ideas and the ideas of others. (4. W.2.1.f)

Note:

Use a graphic organizer such as a KWL or a Reading and Analyzing Nonfiction (RAN) chart.

The RAN strategy is a modification of the KWL chart. It includes five categories: What I Think I Know, Confirmed, Misconceptions, New Information, and Wonderings. The following explains the RAN strategy in the classroom:

https://savemedia.com/en/watch?v=U6Kg4sGAIYs&utm_source=safeshare.tv&utm_medium=download&utm_campaign=safeshare-download and www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6Kg4sGAIYs

Model (I do)

- Explain to students that they will write a report on a topic of interest. As they learn more about the topic, they should become experts and be able to teach facts about the topic to others.
- Brainstorm science and social studies topics with the students.
- Use a RAN or KWL Chart to model generating and selecting a topic.
- Think aloud while creating the lists of possible research topics. Emphasize that the statements written on the chart are facts, not opinions.

Guided Practice (We do)

- Place students with partners and have them share topics and facts based upon their interests in science or social studies.

Independent Practice (You do):

- Have students complete their RAN or KWL charts based on the topics of their choice. This activity will assist them in the planning portion of their inquiry report.
- Conduct independent writing conferences; document the results of the conferences, and provide scaffolding, as needed.
- Bring the students together in a large group to share information about their topics.

Instructional Strategy- Group related information

Learning Target: I can group related information into paragraphs and sections when writing an informational/explanatory paper.
(4. W.2.1.c)

Note:

Preparation:

- Select an informational book to read aloud with text features such as headings and subheadings.
- Use the previously created RAN or KWL Chart in this lesson.
- Obtain highlighters and/or colored pencils to color-code information

Model (I do):

- Conduct an interactive read aloud using an informational text. Provide examples of how authors use headings to organize their information by placing together similar facts within sections or paragraphs.
- Using the RAN or KWL Chart, read aloud some of the known facts and explain how the information can be grouped together in sections or paragraphs. Read statements and determine groupings. Show how to group, and highlight everything that pertains to that topic.
- Continue reading statements aloud and color-coding information that can be grouped together.
- Brainstorm names of headings/sections with students.

Guided Practice (We do):

- Have students use their chart from the previous day's lesson and color code statements that can be grouped together.
- Have students work in pairs to determine what the sections or headings will be called within the inquiry report.
- Have students share the heading titles and discuss how they made their decisions on grouping information.

Independent Practice (You do):

- Have students complete their charts based on their chosen topics within their Writer's Notebook. This activity will assist them in the planning portion of their inquiry report.
- Conduct independent writing conferences; document the results of the conference, and provide scaffolding, as needed.
- Bring the students together in a large group to share information about their topics.
- Use this time to review students' topics to ensure that the topics are not too broad or too narrow, that they are based on facts and not opinions, and that facts are grouped appropriately by similarities.

Instructional Strategy: Begin research and recording, using dash notes

Learning Target: I can summarize multi-paragraph texts using key details to support the central idea. (4.RI.6.1)

Mini Lesson: Dash Notes

SCDE Literacy Initiatives, 2013

- In your research notebook, write the topic you are researching. Example- Pandas
- Each time you read in a new book, write the title and author. Example- Giant Pandas by Gail Gibbons
- When you find an interesting fact as you are reading, one that will add to your research, look away from the book.
- Write just a few words to hold the facts. Put a dash in front of your “dash notes.” Example - live in mountains of China
- Add the page number (if available) Examples- lives in mountains of China –p. 3; members of the bear family – p. 7; thick, coarse, oily fur – p. 9
- When you are finished reading the section or when you are ready to begin drafting that part, turn each dash note into a complete sentence. You may want to combine dash notes into a longer sentence. Example-Pandas, a member of the bear family, are found in the mountains of China. Their fur is very thick and oily.

Model (I do):

- Locate a short video or video clip from a current unit of study.
- Explain to the students that good writers plan effective writing by taking notes from videos or texts to help them. Play the video and model how to take Dash Notes on a large sheet of chart paper as the video is playing.

Guided Practice (We do):

- Give the students paper or sticky notes for jotting down information when they use the Dash Notes strategy.
- Read several pages in an informational text, pausing often to ask students to name something important they could write down from the text. Guide students as needed.
- Allow several students to share their notes.
- Repeat with additional pages from the text.

Independent Practice (You do):

- Distribute paper or sticky notes to the students. Have the students locate informational texts in their individual book baskets and write Dash Notes as they are reading.
- Conduct independent writing conferences; document the results of the conferences, and provide scaffolding, as needed.
- Bring the students together in a large group to share items from their planning.

Instructional Strategy- Writing a draft

Learning Target: I can develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. (4.W.2.1.f)

Note:

Preparation:

Provide each student with 8-12 half sheets of paper. (This booklet becomes the draft of the inquiry report.)

Model (I do):

- Refer back to a previously taught lesson in which students organized their information and grouped it into sections.
- Explain that the plan for the day is to write a draft, using booklets.
- Model how to use a booklet to begin drafting the inquiry report by writing Table of Contents on the first page. Next, in order, write one heading at the top of each page. Explain how each booklet page will be one section of the report. Continue the process of labeling the pages of the booklet. Remind students that they will add a conclusion section and a glossary, as well as one of the following: appendix, timeline, map, or chart.

Guided Practice (We do):

- Have students write headings in their booklets. Allow students to work with a partner to discuss names of headings and review which information goes on each page.

Independent Practice (You do):

- Students will write a draft of their inquiry report, using the booklets.
- The teacher will conduct independent writing conferences, document the results of the conference, and provide scaffolding, as needed.
- Bring the students together in a large group to share one section of their draft.

Instructional Strategy: Clarify Meaning

Learning Target: I can determine how an author shapes and clarifies meaning from words and phrases. (4.RI.8.1)

Model (I do):

- Locate some informational texts that contain *facts* and *definitions* as examples. Also locate some writing that lacks definitions.
- Read the writing without definitions aloud and think aloud as you say, “Something seems to be missing. What can I add to make me understand it better?” Model how different the writing would look and sound if the writer included definitions.
- Explain to the students that informational writing should contain facts and definitions to help the reader better understand the topic.
- Display a section of the text to the students. Read the text aloud and model how to clarify the meaning of words and phrases.
- Use a think-aloud to model how words and phrases guide meaning as a reader.

Guided Practice (We do):

- Share an informational piece of writing that requires clarification.
- Have the students read the text and then turn-and-talk to their partners to determine how the author clarified meaning.
- Direct students to share their examples, and guide their discussion.

Independent Practice (You do):

- Have the students work on clarification of wording within their written drafts.
- Conduct independent writing conferences; document the results of the conferences, and provide scaffolding, as needed.
- Bring the students together in a large group to share their revisions.

Instructional Strategy: Paraphrasing

Learning Target: I can paraphrase to avoid plagiarism (4.W.2.1.g)

Note:

Preparation:

- Create an Anchor Chart displaying Rules of Paraphrasing
- Provide copies of an informational text paragraph for students to paraphrase.

Model (I do)

- Explain that paraphrasing is taking the information from what has been read and rewording it.
- Start the discussion of paraphrasing by having students TALK through the concept prior to locating facts and details in printed materials.

- Put students in pairs, naming one person in each pair Student A and the other Student B.
- Ask questions such as, “What did you do yesterday after school?” Have Student A answer the question; then have Student B paraphrase Student A’s answer.
- Explain the rules of paraphrasing, and display them on a chart.
Reword-replace words and phrases with other words such as synonyms
Rearrange- rearrange words to make new sentences
Realize- realize that some words and phrases cannot be changed, such as names, dates, and titles
Recheck-recheck to make sure that your paraphrase contains the same information as the original.

Guided Practice (We do)

- With partners, have students highlight or underline key ideas in a passage. In a different color, highlight or underline specific phrases and data that are unique to the passage.
- Discuss synonyms.
- Have students paraphrase the information.
- Have students discuss how they paraphrased. Discuss the original wording.

Independent Practice (You do)

- Have students begin collecting and reading the resources they will use for their informational books. Have them to use sticky notes or their Writer’s Notebook to paraphrase information to keep for a future lesson.
- Conduct independent writing conferences; document the results of the conferences, and provide scaffolding, as needed.
- Bring students together in a large group to share their writing.

Strategy: Integrate Features & Running Text (Serravallo, 2015)

Learning Target: I can use text features in multiple texts to describe the relationships between features and gain meaning. (4.RI.8.2)

Note:

Preparation:

Provide texts with an abundance of text features for student groups during the Guided Practice section of the lesson.

Model (I do):

- Model for students how to connect the running text with the information from the various text features (i.e. appendices, timelines, maps, charts, etc.) found in nonfiction texts.
- Choose a piece of feature rich text.
- First, scan the text to see which features are included.
- Then, read and study all the features.
- Read the text, pausing frequently to refer back to other sources of related information.
- Work with students to create an anchor chart on how to use text features to improve reading and understanding.

Guided Practice (We do):

- Have students practice the previously modeled activity with a partner.
- Discuss how connecting the text features and running text helps with understanding of the material.

Independent Practice (You do):

- Choose a piece of feature rich text. First, scan the text to see which features are included. Then, read and study all the features. Read the text, pausing frequently to refer back to other sources of related information.
- Have students practice the strategy “Integrate Features & Running Text” independently. Check for understanding.
- Conduct independent writing conferences; document the results of the conferences, and provide scaffolding, as needed.

Instructional Strategy: Writing a Strong Conclusion

Learning Target- Provide a conclusion statement or section – 4.W.2.1.k

Note:

Preparation:

- Create an anchor chart of “Techniques for Closure” (Owocki, 2013)
- Provide two different student samples of an informational/explanatory piece

Model (I do):

- Explain to students that a conclusion is the writer’s opportunity to remind the reader about what is important about the topic. Share with students a set of closure techniques that could be used in their own writing to create a strong conclusion. Write these on an anchor chart so that students can use them while writing.
 - Closure Techniques
 - *Summary: Summarize the content; presenting the information through a new angle rather than through repetition.*
 - *Reaction of feeling: Tell how you feel about the content.*
 - *Image: Include a visual image related to the overall message*
 - *Quotation: Present an interesting quotation or fact related to what you have written*
 - *Encouragement to reflect: End with a statement that encourages readers to keep thinking about the topic*
 - *Encouragement to act: End with a statement that encourages taking action.*
 - *Question: End with a question that encourages readers to keep thinking about the topic.*
- Model using one of the above mentioned techniques within the sample paper. Discuss how the technique is based on the writer’s personal preference.

Guided Practice (We do):

- Have students use another student’s argument, and try out two or three closure techniques.
- Discuss with students how the closure techniques make a difference in producing a strong conclusion.

Independent Practice (You do):

- The students will write independently, revising their writing to add a strong conclusion to their argument as modeled above.
- The teacher will conduct independent writing conferences, document the results of the conferences, and provide scaffolding, as needed.
- The teacher will bring students together in a large group to share their writing.

Instructional Strategy: Student Writing Checklist (Calkins, 2013)

Learning Target: I can create informative/explanatory writing that is clear, coherent, developed, organized and appropriate to a given task and audience. (4.W.2.1)

Model (I do):

- Write the student writing checklist on an anchor chart.
 - I made a plan for my writing piece.
 - I introduced my topic.
 - I grouped related information together.
 - I gathered information from multiple sources.
 - I developed my topic with facts, definitions, and details.
 - I used paraphrasing to avoid plagiarism.
 - I included text features (illustrations, maps, charts, timelines, etc.) to aid comprehension.
 - I used transitional words and phrases to connect ideas.
 - I improved my writing by revising and editing.
 - I asked others to peer edit and revise.
 - I have a style and tone that is appropriate for my purpose.
 - I wrote a concluding statement or section.
- Introduce students to each item and show them an example of the criteria in actual student writing. This process should take several days - do not introduce all of the criteria at one time.

Guided Practice (We do):

- In small groups or pairs, have students use a sample writing piece to identify where they demonstrated the criteria on the checklist.

Independent Practice (You do):

- As students write independently, the teacher will direct them to refer to the student writing checklist and look for evidence of the criteria in their own writing.
- The teacher will conduct independent writing conferences, document the results of the conferences, and provide scaffolding, as needed.
- The teacher will bring the students together in a large group to share what they learned.

Potential Assessment Tasks

Culminating Assessment: Students create an Inquiry Report

Student work will be assessed using the [Grade 4 Informational/Explanatory Rubric](#) found in the Appendix.

Research Report includes the following:

- Table of Contents
- Headings- minimum of three sections
- Minimum of two illustrations or pictures with captions
- Glossary
- A choice of one: appendix, timeline, map, or chart

Formative or summative tasks will check students' understanding and/or mastery of the standard and/or indicator.

Formative/Summative Question Stems

Ideally, assessing fourth grade students' abilities to compare and contrast texts and use text features to locate and gain information will occur frequently and across settings. Teachers should create an assessment management system to maintain a written record that highlights each student's proficiency in these skills and indicators. A qualitative rubric with descriptors, such as "meets expectations," "making progress toward expectations," and "needs additional support" should be constructed with colleagues so that expectations are consistent from classroom to classroom.

4.RI.8.1 Determine how the author uses words and phrases to shape and clarify meaning.

4.RI.8.2 Apply knowledge of text features to gain meaning; describe the relationship between these features and the text.

1. Have the students look for and identify a number of text features in books and describe the important information gained from each feature.
2. Use this strategy as a way to ensure students are using text features to support their reading of the text. This checklist should not be used in isolation but should be utilized in context to provide a better understanding of the content and authors' choices.
 - Words
 - Phrases
 - Captions
 - Appendix
 - Timeline
 - Maps
 - Title Page

- Photographs
- Fonts
- Glossary

Table of Contents

4.W.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

On-Demand Informational Writing

- Score with a common rubric or use the [Informational/Explanatory Grade 4 Rubric](#) found in the Appendix.
- Utilize the suggested text and topic OR create your own, utilizing the example as a model.

South Carolina READY Scoring Guidelines for Text-Dependent Analysis (Grades 3-8)

Teachers may use the rubric that will be used to score student writing on SC READY. This rubric can also help students understand the strengths and weaknesses of their writing. Teachers may also use it as an instructional tool throughout the writing workshop. As students become familiar and comfortable with the writing characteristics found in the rubric, they can use it to strengthen their own writing. Teachers may also modify the rubric to match what has been taught during this unit and what students should be held accountable for from previous writing instruction.

http://ed.sc.gov/scdoe/assets/File/tests/middle/scready/SC_READY_TDA_Scoring_Guidelines_With_Nonscore_Codes.pdf

Resources

Units of Study for Reading and Writing: Teaching Writing Collections for Grades K-8.

http://www.booksource.com/files/Lucy_UnitsofStudy.pdf

Brainpop: Paraphrasing

www.brainpop.com/english/writing/paraphrasing/preview.weml

Brainpop: Plagiarism

www.brainpop.com/english/writing/plagiarism/preview.weml

Purdue Online Writing Lab

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/619/01/>

National Geographic on YouTube

www.youtube.com/user/NationalGeographic

Resource Mentor Text Lists:

http://www.booksource.com/files/Lucy_UnitsofStudy.pdf

<http://writingfix.com/index.htm>

Notetaker from ReadWriteThink: An outlining tool to help students take and organize notes while reading or writing

www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/readwritethink-notetaker-30055.html

Mentor Texts for Informational Writing

- *Just a Second: A Different Way to Look at Time* by Steve Jenkins
- *Bones* by Steve Jenkins
- *Maritcha: A Nineteenth-Century American Girl* by Tonya Bolden
- *Poop: A Natural History of the Unmentionable* by Nicola Davies
- *When Fish Got Feet, Sharks Got Teeth, and Bugs Began to Swim: A Cartoon Prehistory of Life Long Before Dinosaurs* by Hannah Bonner
- *After the Last Dog Died: The True-Life, Hair-raising Adventure of Douglas Mawson and his 1911-1914 Antarctic Expedition* by Carmen Bredeesen

GRADE 4
INFORMATIONAL/EXPLANATORY TEXT-BASED WRITING RUBRIC

SCORE	4 Exceeds	3 Meets	2 Develops	1 Begins
Focus/Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds skillfully to all parts of the prompt Demonstrates a strong understanding of topic/text(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds to all parts of the prompt Demonstrates an understanding of topic/text(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds to most parts of the prompt Demonstrates limited understanding of topic/text(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds to some or no parts of the prompt Demonstrates little to no understanding of topic/text(s)
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizes ideas and information into purposeful, coherent paragraphs that include an elaborated introduction with clear thesis, structured body, and insightful conclusion Logically groups related information into paragraphs or sections, including formatting Uses linking words, phrases, and clauses skillfully to connect ideas within categories of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizes ideas and information into logical introductory, body, and concluding paragraphs Groups related information into paragraphs or sections, including formatting (e.g., headings) Uses linking words and phrases appropriately to connect ideas within categories of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizes ideas and information in an attempted paragraph structure that includes a sense of introduction, body and conclusion Grouping of ideas lacks cohesion (e.g., list-like, rambling, or repetitive) Attempts to use some simplistic linking words to connect ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not organize ideas and information coherently due to lack of paragraph structure and/or a missing introduction, body, or conclusion Does not group related information together Uses no linking words
Support/Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skillfully uses relevant and substantial text support from the resources with accuracy Uses credible and varied sources Develops the topic with well-integrated facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses relevant and sufficient text support from the resources with accuracy Uses credible sources Develops the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses mostly relevant text support but may lack sufficient evidence and/or accurate use Uses mostly credible sources Develops the topic with limited facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not use relevant or sufficient text support from the resources with accuracy Uses few to no credible sources Does not support opinion with facts, details, and/or reasons
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses purposeful and varied sentence structures Demonstrates creativity and flexibility when using conventions (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling) enhance readability Utilizes precise and domain-specific vocabulary accurately throughout student writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses correct and varied sentence structures Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not interfere with the readability Utilizes precise language and domain-specific vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses some repetitive yet correct sentence structure Demonstrates some grade level appropriate conventions, but errors may interfere with the readability Utilizes some precise language and/or domain-specific vocabulary but minimally and/or inaccurately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not demonstrate sentence mastery Demonstrates limited understanding of grade level conventions, and errors interfere with the readability Does not utilize precise language or domain-specific vocabulary

Grade 4: Informative/Explanatory Writing: Inquiry Report References

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- Dutro, S. (2008). *Gradual Release of Responsibility: I do, We do, You do*. Retrieved from <http://www.sjboces.org/doc/Gifted/GradualReleaseResponsibilityJan08.pdf>
- Harvey, Stephanie., and Goudis (2007). *Strategies that Work: Teaching Comprehension for Understanding and Engagement*. Portland, Me: Stenhouse.
- Institute of Education Sciences. (2012). *Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers*. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practice_guides/writing_pg_062612.pdf
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- Owocki, Gretchen. (2013). *The Common Core Writing Book: Lessons for a Range of Tasks, Purposes, and Audiences*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Serravallo, Jennifer. (2015). *Reading Strategies Book: Your Everything Guide to Developing Skilled Readers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann
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- South Carolina Department of Education. (2015). *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate*. Retrieved from <http://ed.sc.gov/scdoe/assets/File/newsroom/Profile-of-the-South-Carolina-Graduate.pdf>
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